



# VA E-mail News

*Mission: To provide high quality, cost effective health care for America's veterans that exceeds their expectations and is enriched by outstanding research and education.*

September 2002

Kenneth J. Clark, Network Director

## ***No Need to Scroll, Select What You Want to Read***

[CA Governor Signs Bills Authorizing Construction of Vets Homes](#)

[Patriot Day Observance](#)

[VA Mourns Passing of Revered Former VA Secretary](#)

[VA's Lessons for All Americans About September 11<sup>th</sup>](#)

[POW/MIA Recognition Day – September 20th](#)

[VA Appoints Chiropractic Advisory Committee](#)

[25 Most Asked Questions from Women Veterans](#)

[Grant Established for Wheelchair Games Participant](#)

[Purple Heart Recipients to be Honored on Postage Stamp](#)

[VA Patients With Diabetes](#)

[VA Funded Study Links Sleep Apnea and High Blood Pressure](#)

[Obscure Veteran Fact](#)

## ***Check out these Web sites***

**Network 22 Internet Site:**

<http://www.visn22.med.va.gov/>

**VA Compensation & Pension Benefits:**

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/index.htm>

**VA Memorial Benefits:**

<http://www.cem.va.gov/>

**VA Vocational Rehabilitation - Employment**

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>

## ***CA GOVERNOR SIGNS BILLS AUTHORIZING CONSTRUCTION OF VETS HOMES***

California Governor Gray Davis recently signed bills authorizing construction of five veterans' homes in West Los Angeles, Lancaster, Saticoy, Redding and Fresno County. The home in Saticoy will have about 110 beds for 60 permanent residents and other elderly veteran patients who need care during the day. The homes will be constructed using funds allocated by Proposition 16, a \$50 million bond passed by voters in March 2000. Governor Davis is awaiting approval by VA.

[Return to the Top](#)

## ***PATRIOT DAY OBSERVANCE***

Pursuant to a joint resolution approved on December 18, 2001 (Public Law 107-89), Congress authorized and requested the President to designate September 11 of each year as "Patriot Day". Suggested observances are: Hold a "Moment of Silence" at your place of business, school or home at 8:46 a.m. on Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>; organize a memorial service or candlelight vigil in your neighborhood or place of worship; proudly display your American flag at half-staff; sign up to be a volunteer at your local community through the USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network. You can call at 877-USA-CORPS or visit them on the Internet at [www.usafreedomcorps.gov/](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/) to sign up; and talk with your children about why America is observing September 11<sup>th</sup>. After the tragedy on September 11, 2001, President Bush said, *"The struggle of humanity against tyranny is the struggle of memory against forgetting...In time, perhaps, we will mark the memory of September the 11<sup>th</sup> in stone and metal -- something we can show children as yet*

*unborn to help them understand what happened on this minute and on this day. But for those of us who lived through these events, the only marker we'll ever need is the tick of a clock at the 46<sup>th</sup> minute of the eighth hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day. We will remember where we were and how we felt. We will remember the dead and what we owe them. We will remember what we lost and what we found.”* Go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/print/20020904-10.html> [Return to the Top](#)

### ***VA MOURNS PASSING OF REVERED FORMER SECRETARY – PRINCIPI HONORS HIS MEMORY***

Jesse Brown, former VA Secretary under President Bill Clinton, died recently after a long battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 58 years old. VA Secretary Principi ordered all flags flown at half-staff to honor the memory of the former VA Secretary. Brown was a disabled combat Marine veteran in Vietnam – he was appointed VA Secretary in January 1993 and served until July 1997. In his 4½-year career at VA, Mr. Brown earned a reputation as a dynamic manager. Under his leadership, VA decentralized its health care structure, began to offer more inpatient primary care services and expanded benefits for former prisoners of war and for veterans who suffered from Agent Orange and Gulf-War illnesses. Secretary Brown is also credited with increasing VA services to homeless veterans with a grants program and expanded programs for women veterans and veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Before coming to VA, Secretary Brown spent a career with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), serving as executive director of its Washington, D.C. office from 1989 to 1993. After leaving VA, Brown worked as a consultant with a Washington-based firm. [Return to the Top](#)

### ***VA's LESSONS FOR ALL AMERICANS ABOUT SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>***

By Anthony J. Principi

The war on terrorism rages within many of us. This is part of a phenomenon that combat veterans of all wars have seen, but large numbers of American civilians are experiencing it as well. In decades of clinical services, compassionate care and outreach, plus government research and development, we have learned much about combat trauma. In 1979, drawing upon years of experience, VA created the Readjustment Counseling Program – commonly known as Vet Centers – to help combat veterans in their own communities. VA has a comprehensive system of hospital-based programs serving our nation's

veterans who suffer from combat trauma. Now, people who were on the streets of New York City, in the halls of the Pentagon, or in the fields of Somerset County, PA, and saw the violence last year on September 11th are encountering many of the problems that combat veterans experience. They should know that, through long experiences treating combat veterans at VA, we know what will work to help. In fact, support groups and specialists and entire organizations exist to help those affected to cope in a healthy way. We know that normal reactions to the experience of combat include things as simple as trouble sleeping, intrusive images, emotional distancing, problems with intimacy, heightened awareness and startled responses. The impact on the human psyche of witnessing what happened on September 11th is enormous. It is impossible to process easily, and then compartmentalize the horror of that day. We will not forget. If you have any questions or are experiencing any difficulties since September 11th, you can learn more about the after effects of trauma by visiting VA's National Center for PTSD Web site at <http://www.ncptsd.org/>. VA has learned so much from those who have been on the front lines and survived horrific events. That expertise is available to everyone who feels the effects of last fall's attack on America. There is help. There is understanding. There are tools that can bring you back to a healthy, satisfying life. [Return to the Top](#)

### ***POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY – SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>***

Since 1979, National POW/MIA Recognition Day has come to symbolize the steadfast resolve of the American people to not forget the men and women who while serving on active duty during a period of war, were forcibly detained by an enemy government or hostile force. Every President since the end of the Vietnam War has expressed his personal commitment to account for America's missing in action. VA steadfastly fulfills our nation's responsibility for the care and welfare of our former prisoners of war. Between WW1 through the Gulf War, 142,257 American service men and women were captured and it is estimated that 50,000 are alive today. To read more go to: <http://www.va.gov/pressrel/powmia00.htm> [Return to the Top](#)

### ***VA APPOINTS CHIROPRACTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi recently announced the appointment of the members of the new Chiropractic Advisory Committee that will advise him on the chiropractic health programs run by VA. The new committee will provide direct assistance and advice to the Secretary in the development and implementation of the chiropractic health program according to public law. Among the committee's missions are to advise

the VA Secretary on: Protocols governing referrals to chiropractors; protocols governing direct access to chiropractic care; protocols governing the scope of practice for chiropractic practitioners; and definitions of services to be provided. The committee will meet up to three times annually and expires on December 31, 2004. Two Los Angeles clinicians are members of the committee: Reed B. Phillips, D.C., Ph.D., chairman and President of the Los Angeles College of Chiropractic at the Southern California University of Health Sciences and a member of the DoD Chiropractic Health Care Demonstration Oversight Advisory Committee – he served in the Utah National Guard; and Paul Gordon Shekelle, M.D., Ph.D., a physician at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center and associate professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). [Return to the Top](#)

### **25 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS FROM WOMEN VETERANS**

The most frequently asked questions from women veterans – along with the answers – can now be found on VA’s Web site – the information will soon be available in Spanish. According to Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, director of the Center for Women Veterans, *“too many women veterans don’t know that they are eligible for the full range of veterans benefits...or special programs VA runs for them. These 25 questions are the ones we hear most often.”* Topics include information about gender-specific services (including pap smears, mammography and pre-natal and child-care); evaluations for nursing home care; and employment options for women veterans. Go to <http://www.va.gov/womenvet>, which offers women veterans direct access to the Center for Women Veterans where they can express concerns, ask questions and provide feedback about VA benefits and services. In 1994, Congress passed legislation authorizing VA to establish a Center for Women Veterans. The center collaborates with other federal departments on issues related to women veterans, develops materials on VA benefits programs and health care services, and conducts outreach to make women veterans aware of these services. [Return to the Top](#)

### **GRANT ESTABLISHED FOR WHEELCHAIR GAMES PARTICIPANT**

VA announced the creation of an annual grant of up to \$1000 to pay the expenses of one veteran each year to attend the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The grant named the Michael Rosenberg Athletic Award was established by Robbin L. Higgins, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs in honor of her grandfather, a WW1 veteran who served in the 27<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron from 1917-1919. Mr. Rosenberg was

treated in military hospitals and VA facilities after losing his legs and an arm to disease – he died in 1933 at the age of 34. The grant will go to a first-time athlete receiving treatment in a VA facility who would be unable to participate in the Wheelchair Games without financial assistance. VA’s Under Secretary for Health will make the final selection. [Return to the Top](#)

### **PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS TO BE HONORED ON POSTAGE STAMP**

U.S. military men and women, who have been awarded the Purple Heart for sacrifices made on the battlefield, will be honored with a postage stamp issued by the U.S. Postal Service next year. Recommended by the Citizen’s Stamp Advisory Committee for issuance in 2004, Postmaster General John E. Potter decided to move up the stamp’s release date to be issued next year, on a date and location to be determined. [Return to the Top](#)

### **VA PATIENTS WITH DIABETES**

Diabetes is devastating to patients at VA. Almost 20% of all VA patients have diabetes; veterans with diabetes account for more than 75,000 VA hospital admissions and more than 3.8 million VA outpatient visits annually; and veterans with diabetes account for more than 25% of VA’s annual pharmacy expenditures. You can read more at: <http://www.va.gov/health/diabetes/default.htm> [Return to the Top](#)

### **VA FUNDED STUDY LINKS SLEEP APNEA AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

A changing protein in the kidney offers new insight into the link between high blood pressure and sleep apnea. Although scientists have known for more than a decade that sleep apnea and high blood pressure are related, they have not been able to pinpoint the connection until now. Dr. Jon B. Klein at the Louisville VA Medical Center approached the problem through proteomics. In a yearlong study of laboratory rats, they found that changes in the expression of proteins regulating a potent natural vasodilator in the kidney mirrored changes in blood pressure of the kidney. According to researchers, the process appears to play a significant role in the development of high blood pressure during bouts of sleep apnea. The study appears on the Journal of Biological Chemistry’s website at [www.jbc.org](http://www.jbc.org). VA, the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association funded the study. (Thanks To Dr. Michael Littner) [Return to the Top](#)

### ***OBSCURE VETERAN FACT***

Were you aware that VA employee David Gregory, a medical media production specialist at the VA Indianapolis Medical Center designed the seal for VA? In 1988, after VA was designated a cabinet level department, an internal competition amongst employees was initiated. The following description of the seal's key elements are as follows: The eagle represents the United States; The faint circle of five stars above the eagle stands for the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard; the two flags in the eagle's talons symbolize America's history from 13 colonies to the present 50 states; and the flags are bound by a golden cord to symbolize those Americans who have died in the service of our country. [Return to the Top](#)



*If you wish to subscribe to VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network's  
VA E-mail News, go to: <http://www.visn22.med.va.gov/news/news.cfm>*